# Offshore Oil Platform Decommissioning in California

California Ocean Day 2023

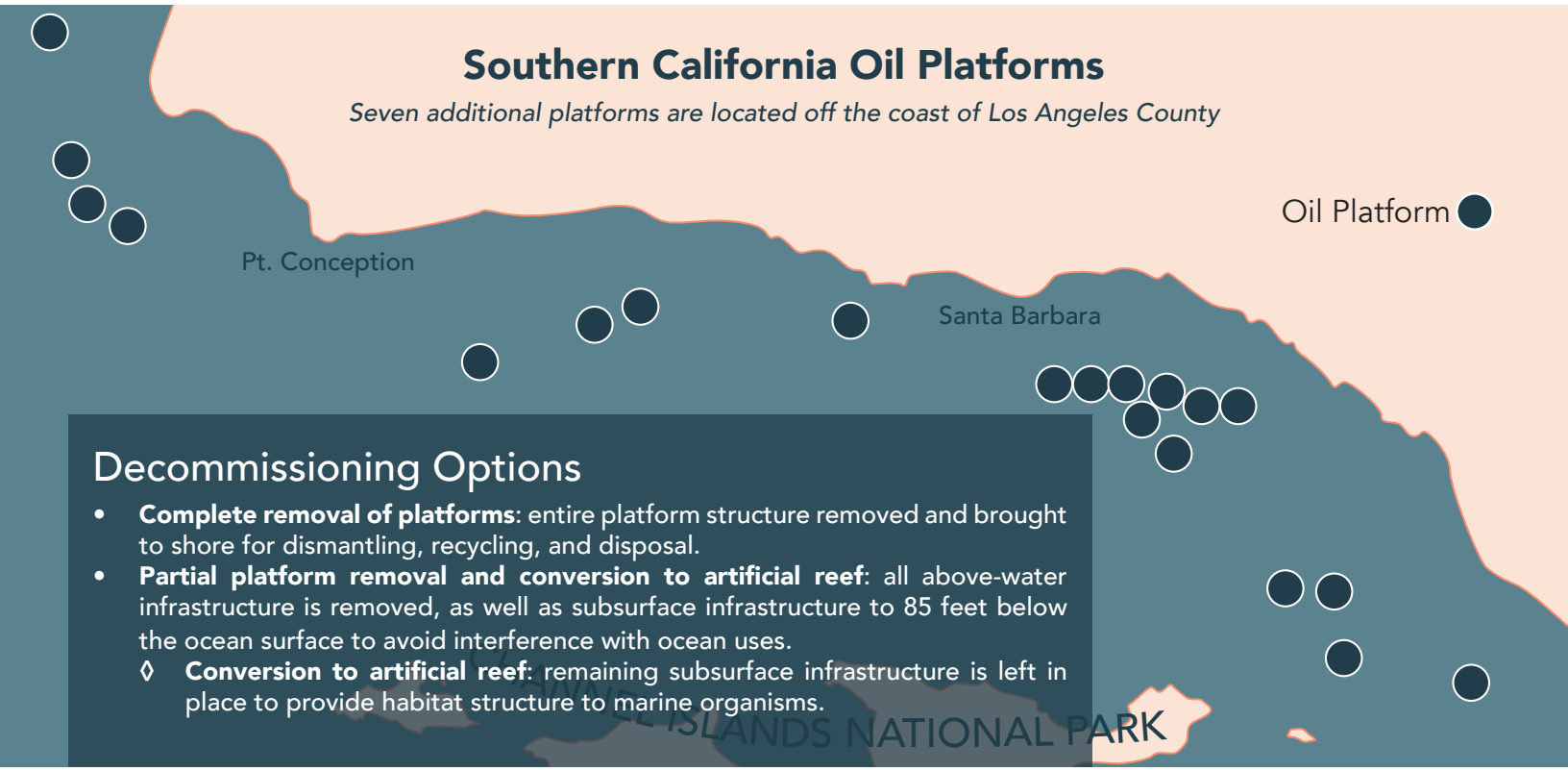
## Quick Facts

- 34 oil & gas platforms installed offshore of California between 1968-1989
- 27 remaining: 4 in state waters; 23 in federal waters
- Water depth range of platforms: 30-1,198 ft
- Platform distance from coast: 0.5-10 miles

As many of these oil rigs begin to reach the end of their useful life, decision-makers will face the challenge of how to decommission rigs to minimize risks and maximize benefits.

## Southern California Oil Platforms

*Seven additional platforms are located off the coast of Los Angeles County*




## Decommissioning Options

- **Complete removal of platforms**: entire platform structure removed and brought to shore for dismantling, recycling, and disposal.
- **Partial platform removal and conversion to artificial reef**: all above-water infrastructure is removed, as well as subsurface infrastructure to 85 feet below the ocean surface to avoid interference with ocean uses.
  - ◊ **Conversion to artificial reef**: remaining subsurface infrastructure is left in place to provide habitat structure to marine organisms.

## Key Considerations

**Platform infrastructure is ecologically valuable.** Reefs established on oil platforms support fish communities with more fish and larger individual fish than surrounding natural reefs.

**Removing all of California's platforms would exceed any platform decommissioning project ever performed in terms of scale.** California platforms present a unique challenge due to their size at depth, which determines how much material there is beneath the surface.

**Decommissioning offshore platforms is expensive.** A 2020 report estimated that complete removal of the 23 platforms in federal waters alone would cost upwards of $1.6 billion in total, while a 2007 report estimated that partial removal of the platforms could cost about half that amount.

**Bottom line:** Differing values and uncertainty about environmental, social, and economic effects of decommissioning options mean there is no single option clearly preferred by all stakeholders.

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[1]Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. 2020. Decommissioning Cost Update for Pacific Outer Continental Shelf Region Facilities.

[2]California Ocean Science Trust. 2007. Evaluating Alternatives for Decommissioning California's Offshore Oil and Gas Platforms: A Technical Analysis to Inform State Policy.